

JOSH HARDER  
10TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA  
  
COMMITTEE ON  
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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
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May 28, 2020

The Honorable Betsy DeVos  
Secretary, Department of Education  
400 Maryland Ave, SW  
Washington, DC 20202

I write today to urge the Department of Education to rescind the guidance issued on April 30, 2020, which directs school districts to divert federal funds intended for the nation's public school systems to private schools. This decision by your department is unacceptable and is robbing economically disadvantaged students in my district and across the country of the funding they depend on in order to carry out a political agenda that prioritizes wealthy, private institutions.

It is troubling to see that the Department of Education is misusing COVID-19 pandemic emergency relief funds to enact policies motivated by a broader political agenda. These actions do not reflect the intent of Congress when passing the CARES Act. Furthermore, the guidance issued by your department is irresponsible given the current condition of state budgets across the country. Current projections by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) [show state revenue shortfalls could ultimately reach 10 percent in the current fiscal year \(FY\) and as much as 25 percent in FY21.](#)

Schools and the students they educate in my district have been hit hard economically as a result of the financial effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Reductions in tax revenue caused by the COVID-19 pandemic could result in budget cuts that would equate to a [15 percent reduction in funding per student in my district and across the state and will likely mean larger class sizes, layoffs, and pay cuts.](#) Over half of our student population in Stanislaus County qualify for free/reduced lunch, indicating many students and their families come from low-income households who depend on our public school systems in the Central Valley not just for food, but also, childcare, healthcare and mental health counseling. Your department's irresponsible actions places those valuable services in danger of being taken away from the students in my district who need them most.

It is imperative that you rescind your guidance and direct districts to allocate funding from the CARES Act to be distributed in the same manner as Title I funding. I look forward to your response to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Josh Harder". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The "J" and "H" are capitalized and prominent. The signature is positioned above a horizontal line.

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Josh Harder  
United States Representative (CA-10)